

REMARKS

Claims 1-6 and 12-13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ryosuke (JP 2000-306226) in view of Kasamatsu et al. (US 5,841,608). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection, because the cited references, even if combined, still would not disclose or suggest the claimed pads as described in the claims.

More specifically, independent claims 1 and 12 describe that the pads of the present invention include a side surface substantially normal to the air bearing surface of the corresponding front and rear rails, a first height, a second height and an inclined upper end surface extending from the first height to the second height. The upstream end of the inclined upper end surface is higher in level than the downstream end.

The Examiner properly acknowledges that Ryosuke does not disclose the claimed pads of the present invention. As shown in Fig. 28, the Kasamatsu et al. reference discloses a projection 74 including a horizontal top portion 74a. A tapered portion 86 “is integrally formed with each of the projections 74 to be arranged on the side surface of each of the projections 74” (see col. 28, lines 7-9). The reference further discloses that “the taper portion 86 is inclined against the magnetic disk 77 to make an acute angle between the taper portion 86 and the magnetic disk 77” (see col. 28, lines 13-15).

In the present invention, the side surface is substantially normal to the air bearing surface of the corresponding front and rear rails, and the inclined upper end surface extends from first height of the pad to the second height, which is above the surface of the rails. The Kasamatsu et al. reference, on the other hand, teaches a projection having a

tapered side surface which extends from the top of the projection all the way to the surface or plane of the slider. For this reason, claims 1-3 and 12 are allowable over the cited references.

Independent claims 4 and 13 recite that each of the pads includes a base pad and an auxiliary pad formed on the base pad. The Examiner properly recognizes that the Ryosuke reference does not disclose this feature. Fig. 28 of the Kasamatsu et al. discloses a slider 71 having a plane 73 opposite a magnetic disk 77 and a projection 74 formed on the plane 73 of the slider 71. Fig. 28 also shows a lubricant layer 78 formed on the magnetic disk 77, and the taper portion 86 extending from the top portion 74a of the projection 74 to the plane 73. A number of what appears to be semi-spherical structures are formed on the top portion 74a of the projection 74 and also on the surface of the magnetic disk 77. No description is provided regarding these semi-spherical structures in the specification at least with respect to Fig. 28.

The Examiner asserts that “Kasamatsu et al. also shows in Fig. 28 that each of the pads includes a base pad having a first sectional area and an auxiliary pad formed on the base pad with the auxiliary pad having a second sectional area smaller than the first sectional area.” While Fig. 28 may disclose a projection 74, it does not disclose or suggest another projection being formed on the first projection, as in the present invention. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner specifically identify the claimed auxiliary pad and the base pad in Fig. 28 using the reference numerals.

Should the Examiner asserts that the multiple semi-spherical structures disclose the claimed auxiliary pad, Applicants further argue that this interpretation is overly broad as

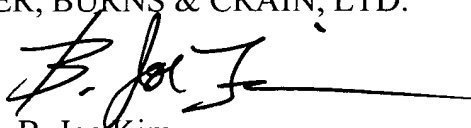
to be improper. Referring to FIG. 24, Kasamatsu et al. expressly teaches that “minute irregularities exist on a surface of the disk 77 and a surface of each projection 74 of the slider 71” (emphasis added) (see col. 25, lines 10-12). The “minute irregularities” shown in Fig. 24 and Fig. 28 of the Kasamatsu et al. reference does not disclose or suggests the claimed auxiliary pads that are formed on the base pads. Therefore, Fig. 28 of Kasamatsu et al. does not disclose or suggest the claimed auxiliary pad formed on the base pad. Claims 4-6 and 13 are believed to be allowable for this reason.

For the all reasons given above, the present invention is now believed to be allowable, which is respectfully requested. The Examiner should contact Applicants' undersigned attorney if an interview would expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

GREER, BURNS & CRAIN, LTD.

By



B. Joe Kim

Registration No. 41,895

December 6, 2005

300 South Wacker Drive
Suite 2500
Chicago, Illinois 60606
Telephone: 312.360.0080
Facsimile: 312.360.9315
Customer No. 24978
P:\DOCS\3531\68536\9J6158.DOC